

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

Replacement drawing sheets are attached.

REMARKS

This application has been amended so as to place it in condition for allowance at the time of the next Official Action.

The Official Action objects to the drawings, stating that Figure 1 shows the pipe coupling in a locked state with the use of locking jaws in the top half, and in an unlocked state with the use of crimping tabs in the bottom half. The Official Action lodges a similar objection to Figure 2 of the drawings.

In order to overcome this objection, applicants have rearranged the Figures 1-5 on drawing sheets 1 and 2. As part of such reorganization, Figure 1 is now divided into Figures 1 and 1A, and Figure 2 is divided into Figures 2 and 2A. Applicants have added no new matter to the drawing by way of such amendment. Applicants have correspondingly amended the narrative portion of the specification to reflect such change.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action objects to the specification based on a number of matters of substance and form. Applicants include herewith a substitute specification, properly presented in both clean and marked forms. Applicants assert, through the undersigned, that the present substitute specification introduces no new matter to the application. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the various objections to the specification are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action objects to a number of claims based on matters of form. Applicants have carefully amended the present claims in order to eliminate the bases for this objection, the reconsideration and withdrawal of which are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action rejects claims 1-14 under 35 USC §112, second paragraph as being indefinite. Applicants have carefully amended the claims in consideration of the helpful suggestions provided by the Examiner, and reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action objects to claims 1-7 and 11-15 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by MARC et al. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested for the following reasons:

Applicants have amended claim 1 to more clearly recite that a rotating torque (the unscrewing torque) is used to overcome the locking resistance of the ratchet. This is supported by the description as originally filed, according to which the resistance has to be overcome over "a sufficient angular distance", i. e. by a rotation, i.e. by means of a torque.

According to US 6,293,595 (MARC), unlocking is performed by pushing back the lock axially (see lock 4 in figure 3 of the prior art, as compared to figure 2 of the prior art, figure 5 as compared to figure 4, figure 7 as compared to figure 6, and in

figure 11 the tool 92 must first push axially the lock 73 before being able to rotate nut 68) whereafter the unscrewing rotation is free (apart of course from the normal frictional resistance of a tightened screw connection). Therefore the amended claim language distinguishes the recited device over that described by the MARC reference.

The differences between both systems, and the technical effects and advantages of the new system are already discussed in the introduction of the specification.

It is therefore believed that claim 1 is not anticipated by the disclosure of the MARC reference. In light of this amendment and argument, applicants respectfully suggest that claim 1, and by extension all claims that depend therefrom, are novel over the applied reference, and reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are therefore respectfully requested.

The Official Action rejects claims 8-10 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over MARC et al. The amendment and analysis above applies equally to such obviousness rejection. In light of the present amendment, the applied MARC et al. reference no more teaches or suggests the full set of features now recited in independent claim 1, and by extension all claims that depend therefrom, than it does anticipate such claims. Reconsideration and withdrawal of this obviousness rejection are therefore respectfully requested.

In light of the amendments described above and the arguments offered in support thereof, applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance, and an early indication of the same is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any questions or requires further clarification of any of the above points, the Examiner may contact the undersigned attorney so that this application may continue to be expeditiously advanced.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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APPENDIX:

The Appendix includes the following item(s):

- a terminal disclaimer
- a 37 CFR 1.132 Declaration
- a new or amended Abstract of the Disclosure
- Replacement Sheets for the drawings
- a Substitute Specification and a marked-up copy of the originally-filed specification
- a verified English translation of foreign priority document